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ABSTRACT

This sampler discusses California's English-language arts assessment program and presents examples of middle grades reading assessments, writing assessments, and writing prompts. The first section of the sampler takes an integrated look at the changes which make up the new English-language arts assessment. The second section presents the scoring guide for reading, six student responses to a sample middle grades reading prompt, and commentary on each student response using the criteria in the scoring guide. The third section of the sampler notes that the grade eight writing assessment will include the full range of writing types that have been assessed in previous years, and provides references to where scoring guides and sample essays may be found. The fourth section presents a writing prompt: a short story with directions for students to write about their reading; guidelines for students on working in small groups to discuss the story; and three writing assignments based on the short story. (RS)

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A Sampler of English-Language Arts Assessment

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Middle Grades

Preliminary Edition

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SACRAMENTO, 1992

CSAS

A Sampler of English-Language Arts Assessment

Middle Grades

Preliminary Edition

A Sampler of English–Language Arts Assessment – Middle Grades was developed by the California Assessment Program's English-Language Arts Development Team (see the acknowledgments for the membership of the team and others who made significant contributions to the document).

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I. California's New English–Language Arts Assessment: An Integrated Look

> Effective English-language arts programs include a wide range of assessment techniques to evaluate students' growth in understanding challenging literature, confronting important social issues and values in literature and their own lives, writing clear and lively prose, speaking thoughtfully and effectively, and listening critically, all of which enable students to participate fully in society.
>
> – *English Language Arts Framework*

English-language arts teachers at all grade levels have long recognized that students use language actively, interactively, strategically, and fluently as they construct and communicate meaning. Students can grow in their ability to use language as they explore the universe of discourse through their reading, writing, and thinking. Authors of *California's English-Language Arts Framework* envisioned a literature-based English-language arts program that actively engaged students in reading, writing, and reflecting on a wide range of significant literary works and human experiences. At the heart of the framework is a paradigm shift in which "constructing meaning" replaced "gaining knowledge" as the primary goal.

The shifting focus of English-language arts curricula statewide called for changes in instructional strategies. The *English-Language Arts Framework*, along with the state model curriculum standards and guides, repeatedly describe English-language arts programs that "encourage students to read widely and in depth, write often in many formats, study important writings from many disciplines, and relate these studies to their own lives in meaningful ways." In English-language arts classes, students are expected to be active participants in their learning.

Where once a single correct answer to a generic question was thought to be sufficient in determining comprehension, today such a measure is considered too constricting, not very informative, and an insufficient indication of the student's construction of meaning. The *Framework* speaks specifically to the need for assessment to mirror accurately the integrated parts of the language arts that contribute to the wholeness of understanding. "With the revised curriculum in place, assessment of its effectiveness must depend on tests that reflect the purposes of the curriculum. Teachers and others responsible for assessment will create tests based on significant works whose meanings have import for all students; tests will integrate all of the language arts by including significant reading and writing and reflecting the student's oral skills as well; and tests will focus on students' meaning, not on formalistic features such as plot and character." Since the construction of meaning is the essence of both reading and writing, the new assessment allows students to shape the outcome rather than to identify correct meanings that test-makers have posited.

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The new English-language arts assessment has three major purposes:

1. To establish standards for evaluating students' performance when they read diverse kinds of materials for different purposes and when they write essays that reflect a variety of writing types
2. To measure how well students are able to construct meaning
3. To improve the instructional program by providing an assessment that reflects the *Framework* and incorporates the expertise of some of California's best teachers

The Development of the Assessment

The English Language Arts Assessment Advisory Committee—a California Department of Education committee representing the whole spectrum of educators—working with internationally recognized leaders in the field, developed the guidelines for a new English-language arts assessment that would reflect alignment with the *Framework*, mirror exemplary English-language arts programs, and build on CAP's writing assessment. Such an assessment would:

- Assess reading in a way that allows students to construct their own meanings, by integrating new understandings with the unique knowledge and experience each brings to a task.
- Incorporate collaborative group work, which encourages students to integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening in ways that reflect good instruction.
- Complement and strengthen the existing California writing assessment.

To carry out this vision, the Department of Education in 1989 expanded the team of classroom teachers that had been developing the CAP writing assessment to include English-language arts teachers from grades one through twelve as well as teachers of science, history, and mathematics. These development team teachers have been responsible for shaping the test format, developing prompts for the assessment, and constructing scoring rubrics.

Definition of Reading and the Reading Assessment

Reading, as defined for the purposes of California's English-language arts assessment, is the process of constructing meaning through transactions with the text. In this view of reading, the individual reader assumes the responsibility for interpreting the text, guided not only by the language of the text but also by the personal experiences, cultural experiences, and prior knowledge that the reader brings to the task. Rather than believing that the meaning resides solely within the words on the page, this view of reading emphasizes the role of the individual reader in making meaning through a process that brings together textual and contextual evidence and the distinctive experience and perspective of the reader as meaning-maker.

As teachers we expect students to be actively engaged in making sense of important values, concepts, issues, and attitudes related to a text. We want students to think critically as they explore interests, clarify values, solve problems, resolve conflicts, generate new ideas, synthesize/apply learnings, set goals, and make decisions in response to the literature they read. We want to see what students can do with the information they acquire as a result of their meaning-making processes and also their attempts to discover new understandings.

In our rapidly changing world, students need to understand that there are many purposes for reading and to demonstrate the ability to read for different purposes. Some students may be able to read elaborate directions for playing a video game but be unable to make any sense of a chapter

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in their history book. They may be able to read the lyrics of a song but be unable to read a poem that has no accompanying sound. They may be able to read a novel but not a voter information booklet. Like the writing assessment in the middle grades and high school that measures how students write for different purposes, the new reading assessment includes a range of reading purposes students will encounter throughout their lives. Although we cannot assess reading in the abstract any more than we can assess thinking, we can assess the quality of reading by looking at written and graphic evidence of how the student interacts with a text.

Texts selected for the assessment are stories, articles, and poems appropriate for each grade level tested. Texts may, on occasion, be an excerpt of a long piece; they will always, however, be complete in themselves. Occasionally two related texts—a story and poem or an article and story—are paired. While it is not possible to match specific texts to individual pupils, the assessment does draw upon a diverse range of materials deemed suitable for English-language arts classes. Since students will construct meanings for a text based on transactions among text, context, and experience, selections for the assessment center around concepts familiar to students. In all cases, teachers on the development team evaluate the appropriateness of subject matter and complexity of text for each tested grade level.

Collaborative Group Work

Teachers on the development team wanted to assure that this assessment was sensitive to both instructional strategies used in the best classrooms in California and those recommended in *Framework*. The activities included in this section of the assessment serve two purposes. First, they allow students to extend their understanding of the reading passage by sharing the ideas they feel are important or exploring a particular aspect of the piece in depth with others. Second, they engage the students in activities that prepare them for the writing assessment.

The Writing Assessment

Criteria for selecting the types of writing to be assessed at elementary, middle, and high school levels include:

- Emphasis on what California's best school writing programs would use
- Relationship to students' reading experiences
- Consistency with students' cognitive development
- Appropriate curriculum sequencing
- Appropriateness for assessment purposes

The types of writing identified for the elementary writing assessment are more broadly-based categories developmentally appropriate for nine-year olds, while the middle and high school categories reflect the finer distinctions of writing types appropriate for their age groups. The eight types of writing used in the CAP writing assessments since 1987 for the middle school and those developed for the high school have been maintained in the new assessment. The chart on the next page shows the types of writing selected for each level of the assessment.

In the spring 1993 administration, two types of writing will be assessed at grade four: Expressive and Persuasive. At grade ten, four types of writing will be included: Autobiographical Incident, Interpretation, Reflective Essay, and Speculation about Causes or Effects. However, at grade eight, eight types of writing will be assessed.

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Types of Writing	Elementary	Middle Grades	High School
Expressive	X		
Autobiographical Incident		X	X
Firsthand Biography		X	
Reflective Essay			X
Persuasive	X		
Problem Solution		X	
Evaluation		X	X
Speculation about Causes or Effects		X	X
Interpretation			X
Controversial Issues			X
Informative	X		
Report of Information		X	X
Observational Writing		X	X
Narrative	X		
Story		X	

The Design of the Assessment

The design of the new English-language arts assessment calls for students to read and respond independently to a text, to work in small collaborative groups, and to respond individually to a writing prompt. Each section is intended to take one class period (approximately one hour). A description of the three sections of the assessment format follows.

Section I: Reading

The reading section includes one or two texts and includes preliminary comments to prepare students for the reading activities. For example, if the task involves two or more passages, students are told that they will read a specific number of passages; if the passage is an excerpt from a longer work, a brief introduction to the excerpt is given. A statement then directs students to read the text and invites them to mark the text in any way that helps them to better understand what they are reading. ("You may mark the text in any way that helps you to better understand what you are reading.") They may annotate, ask questions, draw or write responses in a wide right-hand margin. The reading text fills the left-hand side of the page with the remaining space available for any notes or annotations that the student wishes to write or draw while reading.

After the text, each prompt has an initial response question or graphic activity. This question is designed to elicit students' immediate responses—feelings, questions, opinions, memories, ideas. Four to seven additional questions or activities help students move beyond their initial response to a deeper exploration of meaning. They allow students to demonstrate or extend their understanding of a literary text by connecting with, challenging, and reflecting on the text. Some of the strategies used in the prompts include double-entry journals , listing, clustering, drawing, completing charts or diagrams such as the "open mind" or Venn diagram. Students are invited to bring their own experiences into their transactions with the text in many ways. Each prompt presents a final opportunity ("This is your chance to tell anything else about this story, poem,

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etc.") that allows students to express any other insights, issues, or concerns not elicited by previous activities. Students may, through their writing or drawing on this page, come to closure and/or discover new insights emerging from the text and/or from their reading experience.

Written and graphic responses to texts offer powerful insights into student thinking and provide significant evidence of a student's reading performance. The scoring guide for reading identifies the quality of reading a student demonstrates as he or she engages in the process of reading. Though a student does respond in writing in this section, the quality of the writing is not evaluated. A reading score will be determined from the evidence of each student's performance on the reading section.

Section II: Group Work

Students who have read the same text selection(s) form small groups of five or less. Activities for this section serve two purposes: to extend students' reading of the text and to initiate prewriting activities that they will use in Section III, the writing assessment. Guidelines contain specific directions for collaborative activities such as sharing individual experiences with the text, exploring the text further, making group graphics, role playing, writing informally, sharing their drafts, and responding to each other's ideas for writing. This section is not being scored.

Section III: Writing

The writing assessment section is linked to the reading assessment in one of two ways. Some writing prompts link directly to the reading section by asking students to move beyond their initial interactions with the text to write a longer, more fully developed essay expressing their understanding of the text or evaluating the selection or a character in the text. Other writing prompts are more loosely tied to the reading, using the topic or theme of the reading selection as a springboard to an essay based on personal experience and knowledge. Each prompt has the following two parts and is designed to elicit one of the distinctive types of writing tested at a grade level:

Writing Situation/Getting Ready to Write. This section of the prompt establishes a framework for the writing prompt and provides students with a context for their writing. It orients students to a type of writing and provides specific background about the topic. The occasion for writing is specified in this section, preparing students to be thinking about their intended audience.

Directions for Writing/Time to Write. The second section gives students the directions regarding the assignment's topic, intent, potential audience, and any other information students need in order to respond to the prompt.

The essay written in response to the writing prompt receives two scores, one for rhetorical effectiveness and one for conventions.

Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Population

One of the greatest concerns the advisory committee and the development team members have grappled with as they have developed the new assessment for reading and writing is the effect it will have on California's diverse student population. Teachers want the assessment to have a positive impact on the curriculum, and with the future reporting of individual test scores, teachers

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want the new assessment to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their best reading and writing abilities, and not be a minimum competency test.

Some Californians have expressed the opinion that performance assessment may be unfair to certain populations of students and that multiple choice tests rely less on a student's proficiency in English and are thereby fairer to these students. The intent of California's new performance assessment is to expand the potential for student response and to allow all students to demonstrate their abilities to construct meaning through a variety of activities that include graphics, writing logs, and other strategies. Emerging readers often develop their writing skills by first expressing their ideas graphically, while experienced readers may come to new understandings in this way. This assessment gives opportunities for both graphic and written expressions of meaning. Teachers on the development team are very aware of the necessity of designing an assessment program that meets multi-cultural needs. They have worked in concert with ideas formulated in the California *English-Language Arts Framework*, and have employed every available means to insure that the assessment content—texts for reading, activities for group work, and topics for writing—reflect California's diverse population.

Reflections and Next Steps

California's writing assessment has been recognized nationally as the first large-scale performance assessment to be successfully implemented in K-12 public schools. A key to the program's success has been its close relationship to state frameworks and model curriculum guides for English-language arts, the leadership role of teachers in the test development and scoring processes, the availability of instructional materials and other assistance materials, and multiple opportunities for staff development.

Many of the components that received positive recognition in the writing assessment have been incorporated in the new integrated assessment. Special features of the English-language arts assessment include:

- Continued emphasis on maintaining a strong alignment between state curriculum frameworks and assessment
- A full range of carefully defined reading purposes and writing types
- The focus on reading and writing assessments as dynamic activities that involve the construction of meaning
- Group activities calling for students to interact with texts and with other students and providing opportunities for prewriting
- The formation of teams of teachers to design tasks, scoring guides, and support materials
- A commitment to staff development and scoring supported by regional consortia, the California Literature Project and the California Writing Project

The new English-language arts assessment will provide evidence of how students perform when actively engaged in real reading and writing tasks. Teachers on the development team, along with consultants and Department of Education staff, will continue to refine procedures as they analyze student papers, evaluate teacher responses, and inform their work with classroom experience. The far-reaching goals for assessment are made possible through the dedicated efforts of many outstanding educators who continue to see the teaching of tomorrow's leaders as an admirable and valued profession.

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II. Middle Grades Reading Assessment

The materials contained in this section include the scoring guide for reading and six student responses to a sample middle grades reading prompt that is based on Ray Bradbury's story "All Summer in a Day." The commentary that follows each paper evaluates the student response using the criteria contained in the scoring guide and explains why the paper reflects a high-, medium-, or low-range performance.

Scoring Guide
for
The California Reading Assessment

Reading, as defined for the purposes of California's integrated English-language arts assessment, is the process of constructing meaning through transactions with text. In this view of reading, the individual reader assumes responsibility for producing an interpretation of a text guided not only by the language of the text but also by the associations, cultural experiences, and knowledge that the reader brings to the interpretive task. Rather than believing that meaning resides solely within the words on the page, this view of reading emphasizes the role of the individual reader in making meaning through a process that brings together textual and contextual evidence and the distinctive experience and perspective of the reader as meaning-maker.

To assess a student's performance in reading is therefore not only to assess the richness and plausibility of the meaning that the student produces but also the quality of the process through which meaning is produced. In some cases, students may be better readers than the evidence seems to show. Scorers must give credit for all evidence of the construction of meaning but, at the same time, be careful not to base a score on scorer-inferred meanings. Scorers will always be alert to graphic or written clues that show indications of reading performance. Scorers should also note that neither length of responses nor negative statements about the assessment provide information about the quality of the reading performance. Frustration, confidence and boredom may manifest at any level.

A score should not be lowered by a chance or occasional misreading of a word, phrase, or fact in a test performance that would otherwise demonstrate a higher level of reading performance. Similarly, the scorer must credit an interpretation that is supported by plausible reasons and/or references to the text, even though the interpretation may differ from the scorer's own expectations.

When two passages are paired, one more complex than the other, the best readers interpret both passages and explore implications of the pairing. Less able or emerging readers may be less successful at handling the complexities of the more difficult passage and usually focus on the more accessible one. Looking carefully at the responses to both passages gives scorers multiple opportunities to rate the overall performance. For the purposes of this assessment, when two selections are used, they both serve as the basis for the reading assessment.

Although scorers will score every paper that has any evidence of the construction of meaning, they have two options in addition to score points six through one:

No Response will be given to papers that have no evidence of the construction of any meaning from a reading of the text.

Unscored will be assigned to papers that

1. Are written in a language other than English
2. Are undecipherable because of illegible handwriting
3. Are limited only to underlined words or question marks or statements such as "I don't understand"
4. Have what appear to be idle or irrelevant doodlings or markings on the paper (This option is to be exercised only when there is no perceptible relevance to the text(s) in the prompt. If the text is a story that includes a dog sled race and the student draws a picture of a track event, for example, assuming that there is no other evidence available on the test, the paper would receive a score point one. The picture shows a personal connection at least to the

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word *race* in the text; such a connection shows the student is responding at the decoding level, which is a score point one.)

While every effort has been made to construct a reading assessment approach that gives students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their ability to construct meaning from interacting with given texts, it is important to emphasize that each individual reading score represents the reading achievement of a particular student on a specific day, reading given texts for assessment purposes. No students should be labeled as a "three reader" or a "five reader" on the basis of any single assessment.

Complex factors that affect student responses include the following:

- The purpose of the reading, as established by the prompt and perhaps modified by the student's own needs as established by his or her relationship to the text
- The nature of the questions and activities in the prompt
- Previous experience with the text type or with the subject of the text

Reading Performances

Effective readers *connect* with, *reflect* on, and *challenge* the text. Readers do not need to show evidence of all the performances listed here. The discerning and insightful reader may display a broad spectrum of reading behaviors or may investigate a few selected behaviors in great depth. The exemplary reader may show variety, complexity, breadth, and/or depth. Through their writing and graphics, these readers show convincing evidence of their ability to construct meaning. They may

1. Experiment with ideas; think divergently; take risks; express opinions (e.g., speculate, hypothesize, explore alternative scenarios; raise questions; make predictions; think metaphorically).
2. Explore multiple possibilities of meaning; see cultural and/or psychological nuances and complexities in the text.
3. Fill in gaps; use clues and evidence in the passage to draw conclusions; make plausible interpretations of ideas, facts, concepts, and/or arguments.
4. Recognize and deal with ambiguities in the text.
5. Revise, reshape and/or deepen early interpretations.
6. Evaluate; examine the degree of fit between the author's ideas or information and the reader's prior knowledge or experience.
7. Challenge the text(s) by agreeing or disagreeing, arguing, endorsing, questioning, and/or wondering.
8. Demonstrate understanding of the work as a whole.
9. Show sensitivity to the structure of the text(s): how the parts work together; how characters and/or other elements of the work(s) change.
10. Show aesthetic appreciation of the text(s); see linguistic and structural complexities.
11. Allude to and/or retell specific passage(s) to validate and/or expand ideas.
12. Make connections between the text(s) and their own ideas, experiences, and knowledge
13. Demonstrate emotional engagement with the text(s).
14. Retell, summarize, and/or paraphrase with purpose.
15. Reflect on the meaning(s) of the text(s), including larger or more universal significance; express a major understanding about or insight into a subject, an aspect of self, or of life in general.

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Score Point 6 – Exemplary Reading Performance

An exemplary reading performance is insightful, discerning, and perceptive as the reader constructs and reflects on meaning in a text. Readers at this level are sensitive to linguistic, structural, cultural, and psychological nuances and complexities. They fill in gaps in a text, making plausible assumptions about unstated causes or motivations, or drawing meaning from subtle cues. They differentiate between literal and figurative meanings. They recognize real or seeming contradictions, exploring possibilities for their resolution or tolerating ambiguities. They demonstrate their understanding of the whole work as well as an awareness of how the parts work together to create the whole.

Readers achieving score point six develop connections with and among texts. They connect their understanding of the text not only to their own ideas, experience, and knowledge, but to their history as participants in a culture or larger community, often making connections to other texts or other works of art. Exceptional readers draw on evidence from the text to generate, validate, expand, and reflect on their own ideas.

These readers take risks. They entertain challenging ideas and explore multiple possibilities of meaning as they read, grounding these meanings in their acute perceptions of textual and cultural complexities. They often revise their understanding of a text as they re-read and as additional information or insight becomes available to them. They sometimes articulate a newly developed level of understanding.

Readers demonstrating a score point six performance challenge the text. They carry on an internal dialogue with the writer, raising questions, taking exception, agreeing, disagreeing, appreciating or objecting to text features. They may test the validity of the author's ideas, information, and/or logic by considering the authority of the author and the nature and quality of the author's source(s). They frequently suggest ways of rewriting the text, speculating about the ideology or cultural or historical biases that seem to inform a text, sometimes recognizing and embracing and sometimes resisting the ideological position that a text seems to construct for its reader.

Score Point 5 – Discerning Reading Performance

A reading performance at score point five is discerning, thorough, and perceptive, but will probably show somewhat less insight or sensitivity to nuances and complexities of text than an exemplary reading. These readers are able to fill in gaps in a text, making plausible assumptions from subtle cues; but they engage in these operations with less acuteness of vision than more expert readers. They recognize and differentiate between literal and figurative meanings. They recognize real or seeming contradictions, exploring possibilities for their resolution or tolerating ambiguities. They demonstrate their understanding of the whole work as well as an awareness of how the parts work together to create the whole.

Readers achieving score point five see connections between their own lives and the world of the text. They connect their understanding of the text not only to their own ideas, experience, and knowledge, but to their history as participants in a culture or community. They often make connections to other texts or other works of art; these connections, while always purposeful and connected to the text, may be more predictable than those made by exceptional readers. They also draw on evidence from the text to generate, validate, expand, and reflect on their own ideas.

These readers may explore multiple possibilities of meaning. While they may form firm interpretations early in their reading, they are open to revising their ideas as additional information

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or insight becomes available to them. They sometimes articulate newly developed levels of understanding.

Readers performing at this level challenge the text. They pose questions, postulate answers, take exception, agree, disagree, speculate; however, the questions and/or issues they raise may not be as insightful or perceptive as those of the reader demonstrating an exemplary reading.

Score Point 4 – Thoughtful Reading Performance

Readers at score point four construct a thoughtful and plausible interpretation of a text. They fill in some gaps in a text, making assumptions about unstated causes or motivations or drawing meaning from cues in the text. They usually differentiate between literal and figurative meanings. They may recognize real or seeming contradictions, but are sometimes distracted by these contradictions and by ambiguities. They demonstrate their understanding of the whole work.

Readers achieving score point four develop connections with and among texts. They usually connect their understanding of the text to their own experience and knowledge and sometimes to other texts. When directed, these readers may generate, validate, expand, and/or reflect on their ideas about the text, but with less depth than in a score point five or six response. These readers tend to paraphrase or retell, often thoroughly and purposefully. They also see, however, a more general significance in or wider application of the literal facts of the text.

These readers, while confident, rarely take risks. They accept the text without exploring multiple possibilities of meaning. They tend to present their understanding of a text as fixed and rarely revise their interpretation as they re-read and as additional information becomes available.

Readers demonstrating this level of reading performance sometimes challenge or question the text. They may raise questions and may agree or disagree without explaining their reactions.

Score Point 3 – Literal Reading Performance

Students performing at score point three are literal readers, constructing a plausible but superficial interpretation of a text. They show little sensitivity to nuances and complexities.

These readers develop few or no connections with or among texts. Sometimes they connect the text associationally with personal experience, but the connection is generally superficial and unexamined.

Score point three readers are not risk takers. They show little tolerance for textual difficulties or lack of closure. Confronted by textual complexity, they are inclined to ignore the difficulties. Their reading process tends not to be recursive: having made some initial sense of the text, they are inclined to retain their view without testing or revising it.

Readers at the score point three level of reading performance rarely challenge the text or carry on an internal dialogue with the writer. If they raise questions at all the questions will be largely unproductive expressions of frustration or low level inquiries (i.e., about word meanings). Any expressed appreciations or criticisms are likely to be simplistic.

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Score Point 2 – Limited Reading Performance

A limited reading performance indicates that readers at score point two construct partial and reductive meanings for a text. Responses of some readers suggest that they may not have been able to read the whole text. Others are unable to see the text as a whole and tend to focus on one or two ideas or segments of the text.

Readers within this range of performance develop few or no connections with texts. They may, as they recognize some idea, continue to write or draw, but their responses will appear to have only a tangential relevance to the text.

These readers seldom ask questions of a text or offer meaningful evaluations of what they read. They tend to abandon or become entangled in difficult sections of a text.

Score Point 1 – Minimal Reading Performance

In a minimal reading performance, the reader appears to understand and respond only to an individual word, title, and/or phrase but not to respond in ways that demonstrate even a rudimentary understanding of how these words relate to text ideas.

Any connections such readers may make to their own experience will appear in the form of words or drawings that have textual associations only to an isolated word or phrase.

Level-one reader responses suggest that these students engage in reading largely as an act of decoding rather than as a process of making coherent meaning.

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Sample Student Papers
Middle Grades Reading

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance

Section One
Reading

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day Ray Bradbury	My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Ready?"
"Ready."
"Now?"
"Soon."
"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"
"Look, look; see for yourself!"
The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.
It rained.
It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

I enjoyed the story very much. I think that the emotion displayed by the kids made the story interesting. I was interested to find out how the children would react to the sun and I was happy when they did. I felt extremely sorry for the little girl, Margot. I understand about feeling isolated and indifferent. It was terrible thing how the other children locked Margot in the closet. Kids can be so cruel.

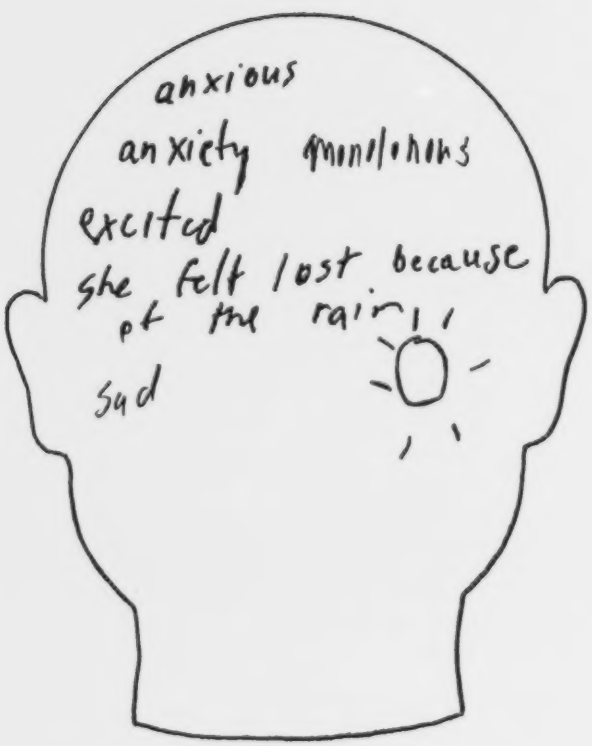
Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

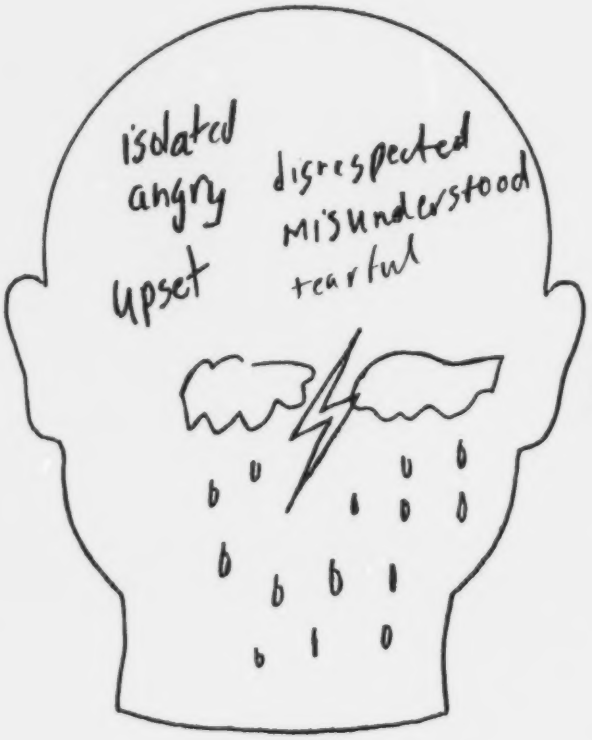
I think the most important scheene in the story was the moment when the children felt the sun for the first time. All the kids ran out to feel its warmth and play without the problems of the rain. The children loved the feel of the sunshine and loved being able to ryn and run until they couldnt play anymore. It was almost heartwarming. But I couldn't forget about Margot. She was all alone while kids could enjoy the rare occasion of seeing the sun.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.



Margot at beginning of story



Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

I just showed how at the beginning of the story she was upset because of the monotonous rain, but she was also anxious and excited at the predicted sun. At the end when she had been locked in the closet she felt extremely angry and upset. She felt isolated by the rain again. Margot also felt very disrespected by her peers.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	These feelings are very typical as a child growing. It reminds me of how hard it is to be a kid and to deal with other peers.
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	I see this quote as being something to do as a resolution to immediate feelings. That's how many children react to conflicts.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

I don't think they would have said anything. Most children at that age don't have the maturity to take responsibility for mean things that they have done. I think that margot would have probably been the first one to have done or said anything. She was the most mature kid out of all of them.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(concluded)*

7. This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.

It reminded me of the few situations in my childhood. It is a very sad thing when children feel isolated and different. I really liked the story idea and I think it was really well written. The science fiction aspect added to the plot. I thought that the writer could have added something about the children's reaction to Margot. I guess it leaves you in suspense. However, I really enjoyed the story.

Commentary on High-range Reading Performance

Although this paper contains no marginal comments, it is clearly not because the reader had no thoughts, feelings, or questions while she read the passage. When we see the responses to the initial question, we are immediately taken by her appreciation, engagement, empathy, personal connection, and reflection. She begins with evidence of engagement and appreciation: "I enjoyed the story very much" and "I was interested to find out how the children would react to the sun . . . ." She also reveals empathy for Margot based upon a personal connection: "I felt extremely sorry for the little girl, Margot. I understand about feeling isolated and indifferent." (Notice later how this reader returns to this personal connection.) She ends the response with a generalized reflection: "Kids can be so cruel."

Her response to question two provides a superb example of reading as a recursive process and of "gap filling." She selects the "moment when the children felt the sun" as the most important scene (recall that she had expressed "interest" in "find[ing] out how the children would react to the sun" earlier in response to question one). Then she explains her emotional response to the sun scene with an important qualification: "It was <u>almost</u> heartwarming (emphasis added)." In lesser performances, readers might be taken in by this heartwarming quality, but this reader returns to an earlier scene (reads recursively) and fills the gap between Margot's experience in the closet and the children's experience in the sun: "But I couldn't forget about Margot. She was all alone while kids could enjoy the rare occaision of seeing the sun."

Responses to questions three and four continue to reveal the reader's insight into and empathy for Margot. Importantly, she is able to sort out the complex emotions within Margot at the beginning ("excited, monotonous, anxiety, sad") and then pinpoint in shades of gray how Margot's emotions change ("isolated, angry, upset, disrespected, misunderstood, tearful"). Notice that within this final cluster of emotions the reader returns to the notion of "isolation," her personal connection expressed in her response to question one. This insight into a character tied to a personal connection appears frequently in exemplary readings.

Responses to questions five and six reinforce our view that this reader is capable of discerning subtle character traits and motivations. However, she goes further and connects these understandings to her own life story. "These feelings are very typical as a child growing. It reminds me of how hard it is to be a kid and to deal with other peers," she writes (question five). She continues this idea (developing the reflection she articulated at the end of question one) when she explains that "most children at that age don't have the maturity to take responsibility for mean things that they have done" (question six). Response to question six also shows a willingness to take risks and to speculate based upon a sense of personal history.

The final comment shows this reader stepping out of the "textworld" by returning to a personal connection and then pondering how and why the story worked. "It reminded me of a few situations in my childhood," she writes, again touching on the theme of isolation. She repeats her appreciation of the story, places it within a genre, and suggests a change that might have made the story work better for her: "I thought that the writer could have added something about the children's reaction to Margot." Then she has a second thought: "I guess it leaves you in suspense." This sort of looking back over the reading act in an effort to locate the text within prior experience with both living and literature is characteristic of the best reading performances.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

"Ready?"
"Ready."
"Now?"
"Soon."
"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"
"Look, look; see for yourself!"
The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.
It rained.
It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

My thoughts, feelings and questions

not on earth
at a school or something

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

My thoughts, feelings and questions

Planet Venus
9 years old
1 sun time every
7 years
Margot's different
comes for 1 hour
Margot has differences
with the other
children (William)

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

My thoughts, feelings and questions

Margot is a loner quiet, unhappy, frail, she had come 5 years ago from earth she rembered the sun

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

My thoughts, feelings and questions

she knew she was different kids hated her feel sorry for her (me) put her in the closet telling her the sun wouldn't come

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

My thoughts, feelings and questions

went outside
first time they
heard the rain stop
the ~~power~~ silance was
~~re~~ immense
their first glance
at the sun
was stunning

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

My thoughts, feelings and questions

many plants
Rios have
fun
then in the
middle of
their fun the
rain started
again

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

My thoughts, feelings and questions

they went in sadly then all of a sudden they remembered Margot they didn't know what to do and finally go and slowly let her out (Venus)

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

It reminds me of the way little kids really do act. 9 year olds would be jealous of such things, you can almost see how angry they would be at Margot.

I think at the end Bradbury makes you feel like the children (excluding Margot) are like the rain. Cold and relentless, until you see how sorry they are for leaving Margot in the closet.

Margot is not part of the rain she needs the sun's warmth make her happy. The rain seems to have washed all the life from her, and then she misses the 2 hours of sun she has been waiting for, for 5 years.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

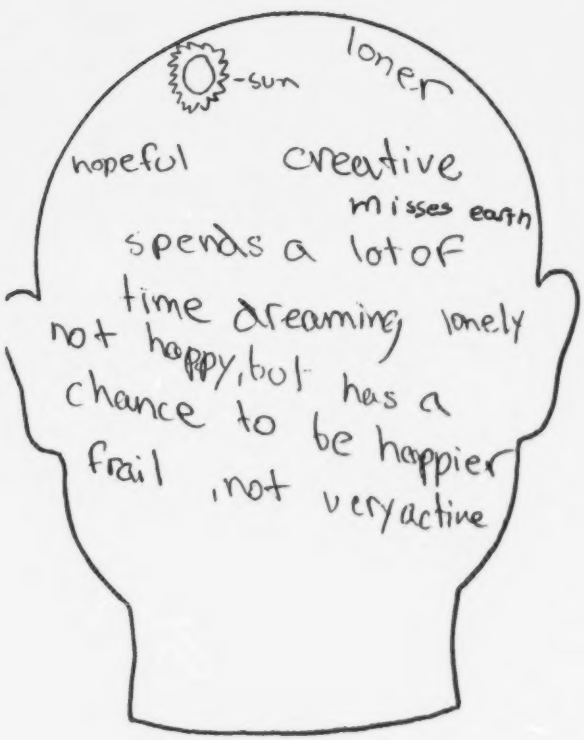
2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

The part where the children lock Margot in the closet. It sets up the whole story, and shows how far jealousy and hate can push people (adults or children) Throughout the rest of the story you wish the other children wouldn't have fun. The closet scene also shows that Venus is not the ideal place for kids to grow up; it has made them angry, mean and hateful.

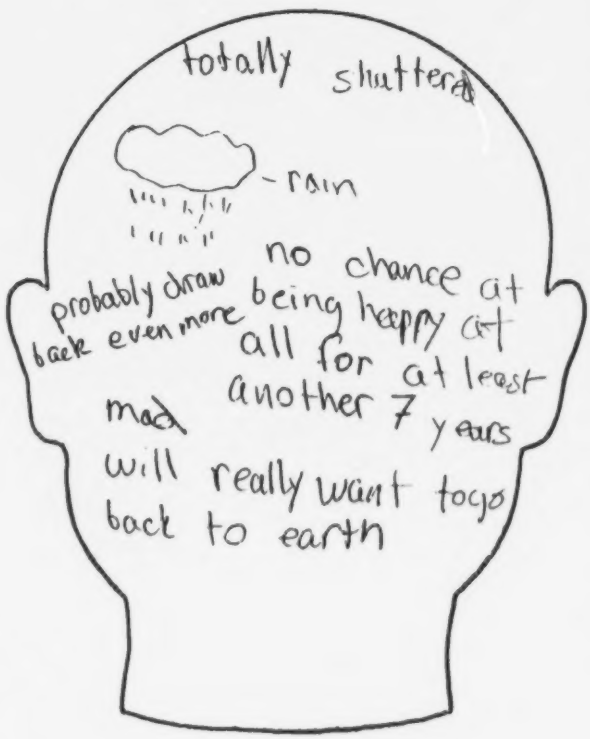
One also wonders why the teacher doesn't notice that Margot is missing. Hatred on her part? Not paying any attention? Lack of skill? It doesn't say much good about the adults on Venus either.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.



Margot at beginning of story


totally shuttered
-rain
probably draw back even more
no chance at being happy at all for at least another 7 years
mad
will really want to go back to earth

Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

Well she is hopeful that the sun will change the kid's minds about her and will make her happier. However until that time she pulls back, is a loner and dreams about the sun.

After she has missed the sun her life will be even more like the climate of Venus, rainy, cold and dismal. Her dreams are gone.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	This proves how cold and hateful the kids are. It also shows how frail and unhappy Margot is and how much she needs the sun.
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	The other children have feeling after all. After playing in the sun's warmth they realize how cold (and rainy) they really have been.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

Not much. They probably looked at the ground mumbled apologies and other things to make her (and themselves) feel better.
Perhaps a friendlier one might try to cheer her up by explaining how nice it was. Probably after they would be friendlier and not grudge her anything.

Student Reading Response – High-range Performance *(continued)*

7. This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.

It made me think about some of the kids I've known who are like Margot.

I think it means man still needs to work on his problems (racist, sextist, etc.)

Commentary on High-range Reading Performance

This reader's marginal comments appear to be little more than summaries or paraphrases intended to assist his memory as he processed and revisited the text. Taken by themselves, they would constitute thin evidence of an exemplary reading. However, this impression quickly changes in light of his or her initial response. "It reminds me of the way little kids really do act," this reader says, fitting the entire "textworld" into his or her understanding of psychological nuances and complexities. He or she goes on to appreciate Bradbury's skill and to trace the lines of a central metaphor: "I think at the end Bradbury makes you feel like the children (excluding Margot) are like the rain. Cold and relentless until you see how sorry they are . . . ."

The responses to question two, where this reader points to the closet scene as an important one, shows acute perception of textual and cultural complexities. "[This scene] sets up the whole story," says this reader. "Throughout the rest of the story you wish the other children wouldn't have fun."

Additionally, this scene gives the reader the idea "that Venus is not the ideal place for children to grow up," evidence that he or she has made connections to a larger community. Finally, the reader probes to discover why "the teacher doesn't notice that Margot is missing" and offers several possible explanations. This kind of speculation grounded firmly in the "textworld" is characteristic of the best reading performances.

The Open Minds and their accompanying explanation show this reader making several plausible assumptions about Margot. For example, this reader assumes that Margot "is hopeful that the sun will change the kids' minds about her and will make her happier"; later after Margot misses the sun, he or she assumes that "her life will be even more like the climate of Venus." We also see this reader engaged in metaphorical thinking when he or she compares Margot's life to the climate on Venus. Importantly, these responses are unusually detailed and full, giving solid evidence of empathy and engagement.

Responses to question five show a strong ability to interpret character motivation and change based upon subtle textual cues. The response to question six continues to build this evidence with the addition of a tentative quality characteristic of exemplary performances ("Perhaps a friendlier one might cheer her up . . ."; "Probably after they would be friendlier . . .").

The final response shows the reading stepping out of the "textworld" to explore the universal implications of the passage. This paper generally demonstrates a discerning and insightful performance.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Ready?"
"Ready."
"Now?"
"Soon."
"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"
"Look, look; see for yourself!"
The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.
It rained.
It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

"Ready"
"Ready"
"Now"
"Soon".

I didn't understand this part!!

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"Concussion"

This sentence didn't make sense.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

Why are they on Venus??

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

why did She go there?? Did her Parents leave her??

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

I don't understand why she did this??

Does she want to go back?? Why did she go in the first place??

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

Didn't the teacher notice She was Gone??

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

WAS this A MOVIE

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

My thoughts, feelings and questions

why did it rain so much??

Why were they there, did they want to be??

This ending is Stupid. What happend??

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

This story is very Suspensfull. I liked untill the end. The Ending disapointed me. I thought there would be more to it!! Telling Margots expressions, how she expressed her self to the others.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

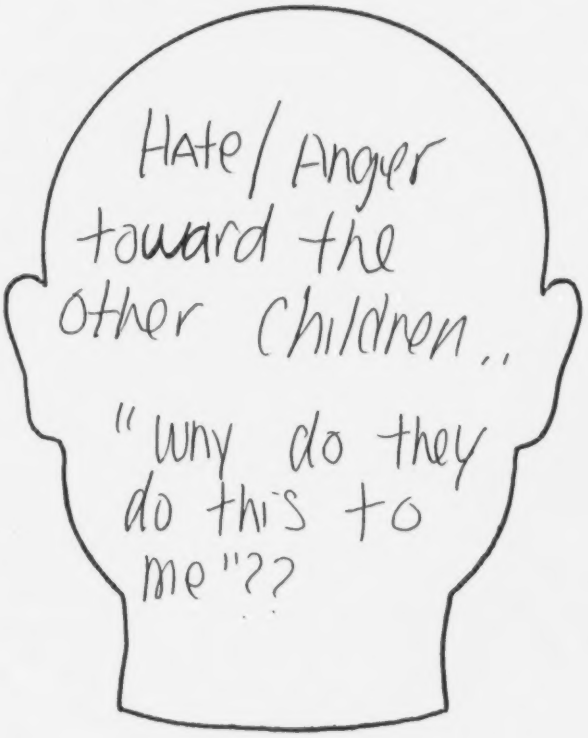
2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

The most important part of the story, I think is when they locked poor margret into the closet. How she screamed and pounded on the door and nobody tryed to help her. And how the teacher didnt even know She was gone.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.

Margot at beginning of story



Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

4. **Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.**

In the begaing of this Story She was always thinking of the time's she had been in the sun and how much She missed it.

At the end hurt and Anger were her ~~feel~~ feelings toward everyone

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	I think that WAS very cruel of the children just to leave her. If they wouldn't have made fun of her, She probably would have played.
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	why were they there. What made them go to a place were no Sun WAS. Just RAIN ??

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

6. **Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."**

How sorry they were, If She forgive them. WAS She mad. The also might have told her that the forgot to open the door and probably there experience in the Sun !!

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(concluded)*

7. **This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.**

This story makes me grateful that we have the sun and were not there :) It's really sad how the kids how to go there and suffer from missing the sun.

Commentary on Mid-range Performance

This is an example of a strong mid-range response. This reader begins to make meaning in the marginal comments using a questioning pattern. Most of the questions indicate an intelligent attempt to construct an understanding of the story and to fill gaps in the narrative. ("Does she want to go back?? Why did she go in the first place? Didn't the teacher notice she was gone?") However, many of the questions display a basic lack of understanding ("I didn't understand this part!!"; "This sentence didn't make sence.")

The reader's response to question one is an evaluative comment ("The ending disapainted me.") Responses to questions two and three show a basic understanding of the story and an attempt to fill in gaps about the character's emotions. ("Why do they do this to me??")

The other responses in this paper show the reader making personal connections and becoming emotionally engaged with the text (" . . . that was very cruel . . ." [question five] and "This story makes me grateful . . ." [question seven]). The reader constructs a plausible interpretation of the text, but doesn't offer the kind of probing, insightful interpretive observation that characterize the top papers. Nor does the reader's interpretation reach beyond the literal facts of the story to more general principles, although the final response seems to draw from the story something of a general lesson.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

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Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Ready?"
"Ready."
"Now?"
"Soon."
"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"
"Look, look; see for yourself!"
The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.
It rained.
It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

How can it rain on Venus? Venus does not have a atmosphere?

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

feverish & tumbling
?

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

How could it rain when the sun has only an hour every seven years to evaporate the water? ~~and~~ So it could rain?

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

~~How sorry~~ How sorry the schoolmates must have felt that they left Margot in the closet while the sun come out.

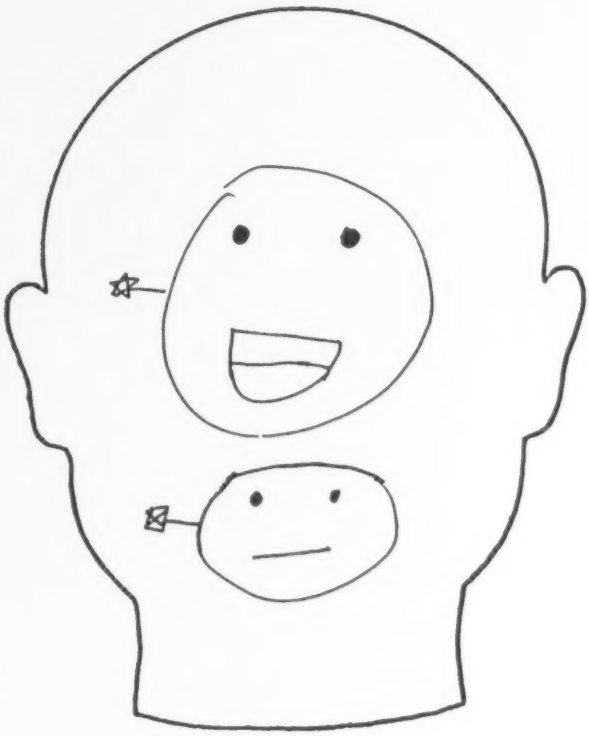
Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

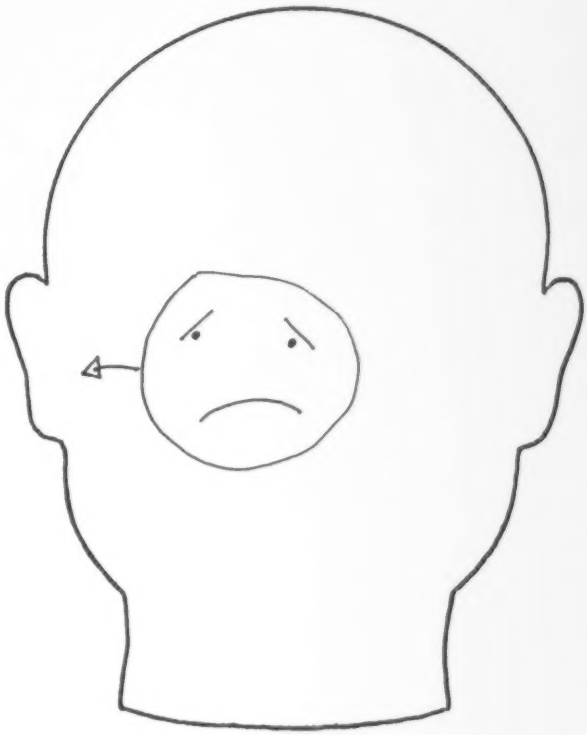
"They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out." This showed how sorry and depressed that she was in the closet all the time.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.



Margot at beginning of story



Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

☆ He was happy that ~~it was to~~ the sun was to come out. ☆ But her family thought of moving to earth. ● Which would cost her family thousands & dollars. ▲ Her ~~so~~ classmates locked her in the closet and didn't let her see the sun.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	They made her feel left out or abandoned to her classmates. I think she would be very depressed.
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	They felt ashamed or very sorry that she was right that the sun did come out.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(continued)*

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

We're sorry about that, please forgive us.

Student Reading Response – Mid-range Performance *(concluded)*

7. **This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.**

This is how I fell when I am ignore or left out from my friends or other people.

Commentary on Mid-range Reading Performance

This paper represents a mid-level response. The reader provides evidence of having constructed a plausible, if somewhat limited, interpretation of the text. The margin notes focus on the reader's prior scientific knowledge to challenge the setting of the text. The responses to the questions show personal connections and emotional engagement.

In his response to question one, the reader expresses an opinion which reveals an emotional connection ("How sorry the schoolmates must have felt . . ."). The response to the second question continues this interpretation, filling in some gaps to draw conclusions ("this showed how sorry and depressed . . .").

The minimalist drawings in the Open Minds in question three express basic emotions (happy/sad). The explanation of these drawings is a simple retelling with little or no interpretation of the story.

The double entry journal responses in question five represent thoughtful though not insightful interpretations of the text. In question six, the reader offers a plausible alternative ending for the story.

The last response interprets the text thoughtfully by constructing a personal connection. ("This is how I fell when I am ignored . . .").

This student's reading of the text demonstrates a basic understanding of the narrative and an ability to make connections to the text, to ask reasonable questions, and to draw plausible inferences.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Ready?"

"Ready."

"Now?"

"Soon."

"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"

"Look, look; see for yourself!"

The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.

It rained.

It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

good wording

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

nice sentence

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

I didn't understand the story at all. It was very confusing to me. To me it made no sense

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

On the 2nd page, first paragraph, first sentence about the shower. It really described a lot about the shower that was going on. That was the only thing I mostly liked about the story.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.

Margot at beginning of story

Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

At the begaining we have her sad and frustred. Also she is in the closet. There is a picture of a shuttle leaving venus and going to earth. There is also a storm cloud with the sun trying to shine through

The sun with her skipping around in the grass. There is a sad and a little happy face. The last picture is her in a electricol storm and she got fryed.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	Sounds like a friend I use to know. No one would go near him.
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	I once got in a fight and that's kind of what happend.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

"Are you pissed by some
monster are something like
that because you're acting kind
of strange lately."

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(concluded)*

7. This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.

It makes me think about California and the long desert that we've been having. How they got seven years with rain and now sun. I wish that we could have at least seven minutes with rain.

Commentary on Low-range Reading Performance

This paper represents a lower range response. The reader constructs some meaning for the text, but it is partial and largely superficial, confusing the order of events and showing little awareness of the motives of characters or the significance of actions.

Marginal notes show some appreciation of the language of two sentences ("good wording" and "nice sentence") in the text. Responses to questions one and two demonstrate an inability to make sense of the story as a story. On the other hand, the drawings and explanation in questions three and four show that the student did construct meaning for several sections of the story (Margot's sadness, storm clouds); however, some of the events do not occur ("electrical storm and she got fryed'), or the events are not in the appropriate order (depicting her "in the closet" at the beginning of the story). Responses to questions five and six seem only peripherally, if at all related, to the story; though the final response represents a connection to the text that seems pertinent and thoughtful: "[It] sounds like a friend I use to know . . . It makes me think about California."

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

"Ready?"
"Ready."
"Now?"
"Soon."
"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"
"Look, look; see for yourself!"
The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.
It rained.
It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

My thoughts, feelings and questions

I dont quite understand whats going on in this part of the story. but I like how the writer used the words.

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

My thoughts, feelings and questions

why does the writer express the word rain three times is it because he wants the word to get through your mind This story is kinda confusing

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

My thoughts, feelings and questions

what does it mean when he says the rain washe out the blue in her eye and the red from her mouth. and the yellow from her hair. I'm starting to unerstend the story better now. But not totaly

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

hard to keep up with the story. don't like it

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

I still dont like this story its borring

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

It allright not to good but they could have used a better story

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

My thoughts, feelings and questions

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

I dont like the endings what does it mean what happens next

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

It was kiwdz hard to understand and hard to keep interested my mind wandered as I read the story. I feel its not a good story to use for this test.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

when he said the hair washed out everything in her I dont know why it's important cuz thats the only part I remember bout the story.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.

Margot at beginning of story

Margot at end of story

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

The first one is about all she saw was rain and she was gloomy but the second one is about when she got happy and when she got out she saw her own sun.

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(continued)*

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

Student Reading Response – Low-range Performance *(concluded)*

7. This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.

Commentary on Low-range Reading Performance

This paper shows a low level response to a reading text, and is characterized by expressions and demonstrations of confusion and frustration.

The reader's annotations and response to the first question express lack of understanding of the text. He mentions the author's repeated use of the word "rain" and asks the meaning of, and copies, a quotation. He mentions a beginning understanding of the story but gives no evidence of this.

In question two, the reader mentions one of the two passages he selected for annotation, but is unable to explain why he chose this as an important moment in the story.

In his drawings of what Margot is thinking and feeling, the reader focuses on two elements of the story, the rain and the sun. However, though he notes Margot's gloomy feeling about the constant rain, he does not seem to understand what happens at the end of the story.

This response to a text shows a very limited and impaired construction of meaning, with no personal connections and many expressions of frustration and confusion.

III. Middle Grades Writing Assessment

The grade eight writing assessment will include the full range of writing types that have been assessed in previous years. Those types are:

- Autobiographical Incident
- Firsthand Biography
- Observational Writing
- Problem Solution
- Report of Information
- Speculation About Causes and Effects
- Evaluation
- Story

Scoring guides and sample student essays for each of these writing types are contained in the *Writing Assessment Handbook: Grade Eight* which is available from the California Department of Education, Bureau of Publications, Sales Unit, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, 95812-0271, (916) 445-1260

A set of six student essays (representing score points 1 to 6) for each type of writing are also available in *Student Essays Illustrating the CAP Rhetorical Effectiveness Scoring System*. This booklet has been mailed with the school and district report, *Survey of Academic Skills, Writing Assessments*.

IV. Sample Middle Grades Prompt

SECTION ONE
READING

Before You Read

You're going to read a short story by American science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. After you read, you will be invited to participate in a number of activities which will allow you to explore your own thoughts and feelings about the story.

Reading Selection

Read the short story "All Summer in a Day." As you read, you may use the margins to note your thoughts, feelings, and questions; you may underline passages you think are memorable or important.

All Summer in a Day
Ray Bradbury

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Ready?"

"Ready."

"Now?"

"Soon."

"Do the scientists really know? Will it happen today, will it?"

"Look, look; see for yourself!"

The children pressed to each other like so many roses, so many weeds, intermixed, peering out for a look at the hidden sun.

It rained.

It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with

Bradbury, Ray. "All Summer in a Day" in *Short Stories I, Literary Heritage Series.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1954.

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus, and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set up civilization and live out their lives.

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tatting drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone.

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower,
That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I *did*"

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're *you* looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to." He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else.

They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away.

There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away!" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here!" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children. "Nothing's happening today. *Is* it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads. "Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they *know*, the sun . . ."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked

My thoughts, feelings and questions

the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes!" said everyone.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes!"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a peaceful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

My thoughts, feelings and questions

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon.

The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them, resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until tears ran down their faces, they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then—

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop.

She began to cry, looking at it.

They glanced quietly at the sky.

"Oh, oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cool around them. They turned and started to

My thoughts, feelings and questions

walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away.

A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot!"

"What?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well . . .?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

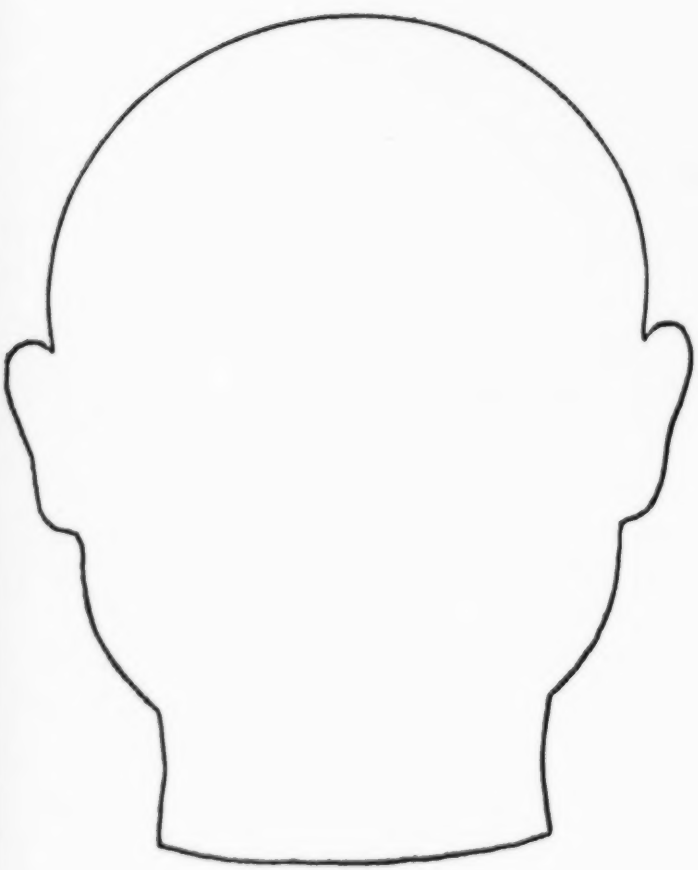
They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

After You Have Read

1. What is your first response to the story? Take a few minutes to write how you felt about the story, what it made you think of, or any other ideas, memories, or questions it brings to mind.

2. Pick a moment or scene from the story that you think is important. Tell what happened during this part of the story and why you think it is important.

3. The two heads below represent the mind of Margot at the beginning of the story and at the end. Inside the diagram on the left, fill in pictures, symbols, words, or phrases to represent what Margot was thinking or feeling at the beginning of the story. Fill in the diagram on the right to represent what she thought and felt at the end.



Margot at beginning of story

Margot at end of story

4. Explain the symbols and words that you included in your diagrams of Margot at the beginning and end of the story. Tell about the differences between the two sides of your diagram.

5. Following is a double-entry journal. The left column contains two quotations from the story. In the right column, write your ideas about each of the quotations. You might consider how these quotations are alike or different, what they say about the feelings of the characters, what they remind you of in your own life, or any other questions or comments that seem appropriate.

Quotation from the story	My ideas about the quotation
a) "They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city."	
b) "They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down."	

6. Write what you think the children might have said to Margot at the end of the story "when they unlocked the door" and "let Margot out."

7. This is your page to tell us about what this story means to you, what it made you think about in your own life, or anything else that you want to add.

STOP!
DO NOT TURN THE PAGE!

This is the end of Section One.

Section Two
Group Work

Working With Your Group

Your teacher will now arrange the class into groups. You will work together for this section of the test. You will discuss your ideas and listen to the ideas of other members of the group. Be sure that everyone has a chance to share.

1. Talk with your group about the story you read in Section One. Jot down images and ideas from your group discussion as you share.

Notes about your discussion:

2. Talk about symbols that might represent Margot and the other children. Choose one for Margot and one for the other children. Sketch your symbols in the spaces below.

Symbol for Margot	Symbol for Other Children

Compare your ideas about your symbols and explain to each other why you chose the ones you did.

3. Discuss each of the following situations. Since this discussion will help you in the writing section of the assessment, you may want to jot down some of your ideas as you talk.

Situation A:

When people are in groups, they very often behave in ways that they wouldn't if they were alone. Talk about examples of group behavior that you have experienced, either as one of the group or as the one the group turned against.

Notes for Situation A

Situation B:

Being new in a school is sometimes difficult. Share experiences you have had being new in a school or in some other situation. Discuss why children are sometimes cruel to the new member of a class or a group.

Notes for Situation B

Situation C:

Imagine that your class is having problems with a small group of students being cruel or unkind to another student. How could you help your teacher and other students solve this problem?

Notes for Situation C

STOP!
DO NOT TURN THE PAGE!

This is the end of Section Two.

Section Three
Writing

(Sample Writing Prompt #1: Autobiographical Incident)

Writing Situation

You have read and talked about a story in which a classroom of children acted as a group instead of as individuals. You have also shared your own experiences of how people in groups sometimes behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were by themselves.

You class is putting together a book called "How People Change When They Are Part of a Group." Each of you is to write about a time when you experienced this group behavior. Select a time when you were part of a group that acted in a way that was not usual behavior for you.

Directions for Writing

Write about a time when you behaved in a way that was unusual for you because you were in a group. Describe where you were, what happened, who else was involved, and why you remember this incident in your life. Be sure to include details so that your readers will understand how your behavior in this instance differed from your usual behavior.

Section Three
Writing

(Sample Writing Prompt #2: Speculation about Causes or Effects)

Writing Situation

In the story "All Summer and a Day," a group of children are unkind to Margot. We often see a similar situation in our own schools or classrooms. Some children tease, pick on, or are simply cruel to another child. Imagine that your whole class has read this story and that your teacher has asked you to speculate about the reasons some children pick on or are cruel to others. You will be writing your ideas in an essay to share with other members of the class.

Directions for Writing

Write an essay speculating about what causes children to pick on or be cruel to other children. You might want to explore different possible causes. You may use evidence, examples, and anecdotes from your experience, reading, and viewing to develop a plausible explanation for the causes of such cruel behavior. Your purpose in this essay is to offer your readers the most thoughtful explanation possible.

Section Three
Writing
(Sample Writing Prompt #3: Problem Solution)

Writing Situation

Imagine that a small group of students in your classroom is insensitive or cruel to a new student in the room. Your teacher has asked for your advice in helping her to solve this problem. Each of you is to write a letter to your teacher explaining your understanding of the problem and possible solutions. Your teacher will share these with the class as you try to solve the problem together.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to your teacher giving her advice on how to solve the problem of the insensitivity or cruelty of some of the students to the new person in the class. Briefly explain this problem as you see and understand it and propose your solution to this problem. Support your solution with reasons that will convince the teacher that your advice will help to solve the problem.

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